

Concord Energy and Environment Advisory Committee  
Wednesday, June 26, 2024  
6:30 PM  
City Council Chambers  
MINUTES

Attendees: Rob Werner (Chair), Councilor Stacey Brown, Allen Desbiens, Nick Babladelis, Chuck Willing, Dot Currier, Beth Fenstermacher (Staff, Director of Special Projects and Strategic Initiatives), Jennifer Punsalang-Cloutier (UNH Sustainability Fellow).

Guest: Miriah King (Penacook resident)

Absent: Councilor Jeffrey Foote, Carl Cooley, Jeffrey Evans, Gerald Eaton, Jennifer Galbraith, Elliot Clendenning and Frances Lesser (student representatives).

I. Welcome and Introductions

Committee Chairman Rob Werner opened the meeting at 6:30 PM. Introductions between the Committee members/staff and Miriah King were made. Miriah is stepping in for Jennifer Galbraith as Concord's representative in helping to plan the Energy Expo on October 26 at Bow Middle School. She might also be a potential new Committee member.

The draft minutes of the May 22, 2024 monthly meeting were distributed. A motion was made by Councilor Brown, seconded by Nick Babladelis, to amend the draft minutes to mention a discussion of community power temporary tattoos at that meeting. It was VOTED unanimously to amend the minutes accordingly. A motion was made by Councilor Brown, seconded by Chuck Willing, to accept the Minutes of the April 24, 2024 meeting as so amended. It was VOTED unanimously to accept those minutes as amended.

II. Municipal Projects

Solar RFP for the City Landfill – Beth Fenstermacher reported that the PILOT agreement and other agreements between the City and the developer, Kearsarge Energy, are still under review. Kearsarge has received an interconnection study from Unitil and will proceed with final engineering studies.

West Portsmouth Street Solar Project – Beth reported that the Planning Board recently conditionally approved the site plan applications for the 6 MW solar project to be developed by Lodestar Energy on the Brochu property at West Portsmouth Street.

III. Community Power – Status Report and Public Engagement Plan

Chuck and Beth reviewed developments on community power since the May 22 Committee meeting. The Concord Electric Aggregation Plan was approved by the NH Public Utilities Commission (the PUC) on June 5. The City Council then approved the Plan without amendments at its meeting on June 10. Subsequently, the City Manager executed the Cost Sharing Agreement and the Member Services Contract with the Community Power Coalition of New Hampshire (CPCNH) and related documents required in order to launch the Concord Community Power program.

Chuck then discussed electricity supply rates. Until has received PUC approval of a default electric supply rate of 10.506 cents/kilowatt-hour for the August 1, 2024 through January 31, 2025 rate period (the Fall 2024 Rate Period). Eversource has proposed a default electric supply rate of 10.458 cents/kilowatt-hour for the Fall 2024 Rate Period, but that rate has not yet been approved by the PUC. The PUC ordered Eversource to make another filing by July 10, following which the PUC will approve the new rate. It is not anticipated that the final Eversource rate will change materially from what was proposed. The CPCNH Board of Directors will consider and vote on CPCNH's new electric rates for the Fall 2024 Rate Period at its June 27 meeting. It is anticipated that CPCNH's Granite Plus rate (33% renewable energy) will be lower than the utilities' default electric supply rates for the Fall 2024 Rate Period, which will enable Concord Community Power program to launch with Granite Plus as the default offering during CPCNH's next launch window in October 2024. Chuck promised to advise the Committee members of the new CPCNH rates once they are approved.

Jennifer Punsalang-Cloutier, Concord's UNH Sustainability Fellow, then made a presentation on public engagement for community power. Many activities will be undertaken by Jennifer and Stefanie Breton, the City's Public Information Officer. These include updating the Concord Sustainability web page, coordinating with Concord TV, media outreach and utilizing the City's various communications and social media tools. The main thing CEEAC members can help with is outreach to community groups. Jenn circulated a signup sheet for members to commit to reaching certain groups. Jenn might also seek input or participation from members in certain other outreach efforts.

#### IV. Policy and Project Updates

Rob Werner told the Committee that he attended the ICLEI World Congress from June 18-21 in Sao Paulo, Brazil. It was an interesting event, with about 2000 attendees from all over the world. Rob recalled Concord's ICLEI-inspired public input session last year where participants sent a strong message that they want to see more renewable energy in Concord.

Rob said that there are currently 3 vacancies on the Committee and asked the Committee members to think about what skills or background would be most valuable in new Committee members.

Rob asked the Committee members what other priorities the Committee should focus on aside from community power. Among the ideas that were mentioned – transitioning the City fleet to EVs, and reinvigorating a Weatherize or Solarize campaign. Councilor Brown mentioned her idea to establish a sustainability fund which could be used to fund small projects (e.g., bike racks) that might otherwise get overlooked in the overall City budgeting process. Beth talked about the opportunities and challenges of developing grant funding proposals for sustainability projects. There are funding opportunities, but timeframes to respond are often tight so the City would be better served to develop more proposals in advance and then seize opportunities to fund those proposals when they arise. Perhaps the Committee could help with this. The Committee also discussed the need for better coordination with other City committees and bodies so that we work on proposals and initiatives together more often. Beth also discussed a study of EV chargers for City vehicles that might be installed at certain City properties.

Sam Evans-Brown from Clean Energy NH reached out to Beth and Councilor Brown about a grant opportunity for EV Chargers. Beth mentioned the concern is with the 30% match requirement and quickly approaching August deadline. Beth will follow up with Sam regarding his proposal to partner with DES.

Council Brown discussed the environmental implications of Concord School District's decision to site the new middle school near Broken Ground School. She said that the School District had recently made a decision to purchase 12 diesel buses and 3 EV buses. Councilor Brown discussed an idea for a bike train for children to and from school.

Upon MOTION by Councilor Brown, seconded by Dot Currier, it was unanimously VOTED to adjourn at 8:15 PM.